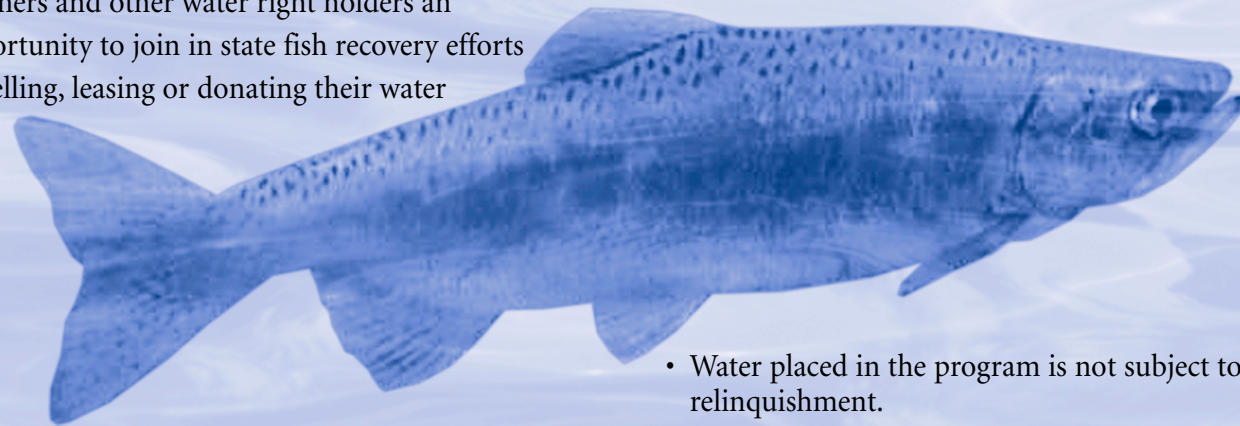


Help Increase Stream Flows in Critical River Basins

The Washington state departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife and the Conservation Commission have launched the [Washington Water Acquisition Program](#), a voluntary program designed to increase stream flows in 16 watersheds (*see list*) with vulnerable fish populations. The program has strong support from a variety of local, state, federal and tribal governments as well as private organizations.

How the Program Works

The [Water Acquisition Program](#) gives farmers, ranchers and other water right holders an opportunity to join in state fish recovery efforts by selling, leasing or donating their water



rights to streams where critically low flows limit fish survival. The amount of water specified in the water rights obtained through the program will be left in the original stream to enhance flows. The state has developed criteria and guidance to make sure all participants receive fair market value. Acquisitions will be targeted in areas that will most help fish.

Ways to Participate

To participate, you can:

Sell all or part of your water right:

- Water will be held permanently in trust by the state.

Lease all or part of your water right:

- Long-term leases have a higher priority.
- Water placed in the program is not subject to relinquishment.

Donate all or part of your water right on a permanent or temporary basis:

- Permanent donations have a higher priority.
- When the donation period ends, you'll receive the same amount back that was contributed.

- Water placed in the program is not subject to relinquishment.
- Donations may qualify as a charitable tax deduction.

Those already involved in the state [Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program](#) can voluntarily place all or part of their saved water into state trust to enhance stream flows. The dollar value of the water set aside to improve flows must at least be equal to the amount of public grant money used for the conservation measure or irrigation efficiency.

In Some Watersheds, Fish Populations are in Peril

Over the last 10 years, salmon and fish numbers have dropped dramatically. The decline in populations has been severe enough that many fish are now listed as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. Fish need plenty of cool, clean water and accessible habitat to survive and thrive. In many watersheds, water withdrawals have significantly lowered stream flows or altered the seasonal distribution of water. In summer and fall, when fish need water for migration and spawning, sufficient stream flows may not be there. Low flows also raise water temperatures and concentrate pollutants that can sicken or kill fish.

An Important Tool To Restore Stream Flows

The [Water Acquisition Program](#) is an important tool to support fish survival. Water right acquisitions are particularly well-suited to small streams and tributaries where saving even small amounts of water can be beneficial for fish. While “instream” flows have been set by state law in some watersheds, these adopted flow levels are often not being met. Therefore, simply setting new or amending existing stream flow rules in basins with chronic low-flow conditions will not necessarily increase water available to fish. Targeted acquisitions will help meet instream flows.

Fish Critical Watersheds

Cedar-Sammamish

Chambers-Clover

Duwamish-Green

Elwha-Dungeness

Lower Yakima

Methow

Middle Snake

Naches

Nooksack

Okanogan

Puyallup-White

Quilcene-Snow

Snohomish

Upper Yakima

Walla Walla

Wenatchee



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Or visit our web page at

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html

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Washington Water Acquisition Program

*Finding Water to
Restore Streams*



Publication No. 02-11-016